1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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ports were live animals and live animal products, such as butter.

Of these exports, of course, cattle were the most valuable item and represented the great export staple. They were likewise the crop to which most other produce could be devoted when not used as human food. That this kind of conversion of other stuffs into cattle could take place is to be seen in the figures for milk. Though the Free State produced in the year in question a total of 589,000,000 gallons of milk, including both whole milk and butter, comparing favorably with such an output as Switzerland's yearly 528,000,000 in 1923, only 43 per cent of it was exported, while in Switzerland the export was 67 per cent of the Swiss total.

The figures for exports introduce a new factor of difference between the holdings of large and small size and their populations. Small holdings do not share equally with large holdings either in the consumption of agricultural produce or in its export. In both consumption and export commerce in the Free State, small holders and large holders play distinct roles.

Taking the first of these considerations, the figures for consumption reveal the difference. The estimated human consumption of whole milk (as milk) was some 90,000,000 gallons, according to the statistical record of the year 1928,[17] of which 70,000,000 gallons were consumed by agriculturalists and 20,000,000 by the remainder of the population. It was estimated that on the farms 38 gallons were consumed yearly per person. But that is the figure for all farms. There is a considerable difference here between types of farms.

Thus, in this case, on farms less than 50 acres only 36 gallons per person per annum were consumed, it was estimated, while on farms of over 50 acres, the consumption was 42 gallons. In Munster, the chief milk-producing province,

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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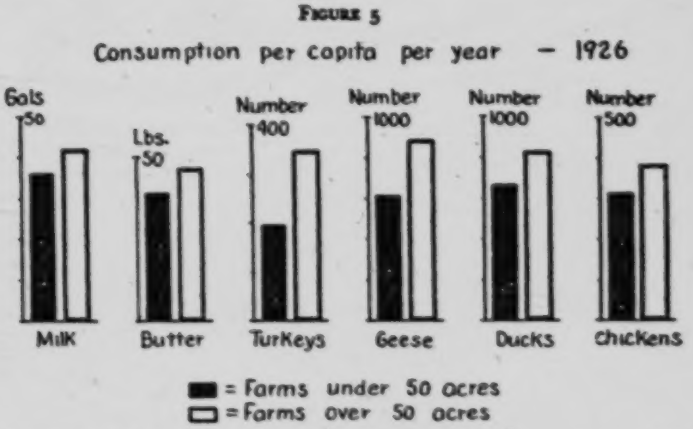
the difference is even more marked, the indices being 35 gallons and 44 gallons.

Similar differences hold as well for the consumption of milk as butter, a commodity of which the Irish consume more than any other civilized country. The difference between farms under and farms over 50 acres can be expressed in the spread between 40 and 48 pounds annual consumption per person. For poultry and for eggs, great farm diet staples, similar differences hold. On farms less than 50 acres, 197 turkeys, 601 geese, 672 ducks, and 3,177 ordinary

FIGURE 5



Notice that in each instance the smaller farms produce more, consume less. The great "money crop," cattle, which neither party consumes to any great degree, tells another story.

fowls, we are told, were consumed in the year in question, for every 1,000 persons living on such farms; while on farms over 50 acres, 325, 884, 873, and 3,823 are the respective figures. "As might be expected, the difference between average consumption on large and small farms of valuable fowl like turkeys is very marked." [18]

In the case of eggs, of those consumed per 100 persons on

[18] *Agricultural Output . . . ,* 1926–27, p. 37.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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farms in January 1929,[19] the figures are for small farms 530, for large farms 582. All of these figures reflect a difference of diet the more marked because the small farmer population is so much the larger.

In Figure 5 this difference of consumption is represented in the form of blocks depicting the contrast between small and large farms. One could conclude quite rightly from this kind of picture that in each instance the smaller farms produce more per person at work and eat less. In terms of production, then, the small farm is the more productive. In terms of monetary return, it is a different story. Cattle, of course, are the Irish "money crop," much like cotton and wheat in parts of the United States.

Observation makes it clear that this difference of diet is more marked than even these figures reveal. But figures for other items of diet appearing in agricultural production are not available in correlation with farm size. The home consumption of meats from the farm animals, except pigs, is negligible among both kinds of farmers. Nevertheless, we can gain a substantial insight into the difference in meat-eating between large and small farmers when we realize that, out of the comparatively small total of 123,000 cattle and 504,000 sheep and lambs slaughtered for consumption in the Free State in 1926, a per capita count of average consumption by dressed weight gives such a predominantly large-holding county as Westmeath a weight of 34 pounds per consuming person, counties with large urban population rising higher, while the same count gives such a predominantly small-holding county as Mayo a weight of only 13 pounds. Clare, where small and medium farmers are predominant in the population, shows a similar small consumption of meat, a similar count giving only 19 pounds per person.[20]

In fact, the large farm population shares a meat diet with

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 48 and 49.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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241 the cities and larger towns that is unknown on the small
262 farms. The fact is evident when it is observed that Dublin,
511 Cork, and Waterford counties (each dominated numerically by the city of the name) count an average meat consumption taken on the same scale of 69, 40, and 37 pounds per capita respectively.

231 The difference between the two kinds of farm shows itself
241 again strongly in the export trade from Ireland and in the
439 roles of each in the transfer of farm produce to its ultimate market. The two kinds of farm make a totally different disposal of their produce, particularly their cattle. In this fact we see for the first time that in some regard they have a complementary role. Between them Irish cattle trade is carried on.

231 The huge internal Irish cattle trade is thus significant.
438 It reveals itself in the figures as a movement from small farm to large, an interchange between the two kinds of farmers which shows once again their distinctness. The trade is both geographical and social, in the sense that it flows between two sections of Ireland and between her two great agricultural classes.

To get at the facts which show the case demands looking at the statistics of cattle in the Free State. These illustrate clearly how far the internal cattle trade shows up the great difference between the two types of farm. It is necessary to take into consideration the age groups of cattle in the various areas and in the possession of holders of various acreages in those areas. This roundabout course of determining the outlines of internal cattle trade is necessary because there are no barriers or *octrois* at which count might be made as the cattle move from dealer to dealer across the country.

231 The seven southwestern counties are the areas predominant in milch cattle production; they are the areas of the calf-producing cow. Clare is one of these. A chart of birth dates of cattle in various parts of Ireland demonstrates that

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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members and the organization of effort involved. It is to be expected, of course, that there is a great deal of variation at different seasons of the year, a fact which makes it impossible to describe farm activities without reference to seasonal change and the requirements of various crops. Nevertheless, the work round the house is constant and less variant than that outside on the "land," and for that reason it is significant to begin with it.

A typical winter day begins for the farm family about seven-thirty in the morning. At other seasons the family rises earlier, but the long wet days have reduced outside work to a bare minimum and confine the work of the family members within doors. To the woman falls the first duty of the day. She must rake together such live ashes as remain in the slaked turf fire in the hearth, put down new sods for the fire, and rekindle the blaze. This done, she hangs the kettle on the hook, making ready for the first tea of the day. For the rest of the day she must keep the hanging kettle ready, for at any moment of the day she may be called upon to serve a cup of tea to her husband, children, and all visitors. With the first tea comes breakfast, usually of bread, eggs, and milk. By the time breakfast is finished, the household is ready for its workaday existence. The farmer father and husband is dressed and ready for his daily tasks, in which he relies upon the aid of whatever grown sons may still be at home, and who now take their breakfasts beside him. Similarly, the farm wife and mother who serves her men, husband and sons, and stands by unwilling to take her place at the deal table before the window at one side of the kitchen hearth until they have eaten their fill, is ready to begin her daily round with the help of the daughters and young children of both sexes who wait their turns with her.

In the household the responsibility of day-to-day housekeeping belongs to the woman. Hers, too, is the care of the

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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pork. By the time this is ready, the men are in from the fields impatient for their dinner.

In the meantime the men have been engaged upon work of their own. The farmer rises when he hears his wife busy herself in rekindling the turf on the hearth. If there are sons, he wakes them. After that he goes to the cow barns in the haggard to inspect the cattle housed there overnight and tend to their wants in water and hay. After breakfast, if the day is fine, neither too bitterly cold nor too soakingly wet, he sallies forth into the fields to whatever work the time of the year demands. If he finds himself confined to the house, he still has plenty to do in house and haggard.

If he and his sons go to the fields, he probably returns about eleven-thirty for the noon meal, the heavy meal of the day. Long habit calls forth his hunger and identifies it with the house. Several countrymen have remarked that they never feel hungry away from the house but are ready to eat when they get inside. The dinner unites most of the family for the first time during the day since breakfast. Only the small children of school age are absent. Their share of the meal is often saved for them until they return about four o'clock.

As at breakfast, the men sit down together immediately, falling to the steaming plates of cabbage, bacon, and potatoes the woman sets before them. As they eat, she stands ready to refill their plates, talking with them about the morning's work and the news of the neighborhood. It is the chief time of family conversation. During the meal the woman has boiled tea and, when the men finish with their plates, she clears away and lays bread and tea before them. Sometimes there is a longer interval between tea and dinner, devoted to smoking and talk.

As before, the women and children do not eat until the men have finished. They take their places together when the men have left or have moved off to smoke an after-dinner pipe, an indispensable part of the meal for them.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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The farmer's work in the gardens does not end with the "landing of the potatoes." Mangels and turnips and whatever grains he may grow must be planted, the soil prepared for them, and the growing crop weeded and tended. With the planting of the turnips, the last crop to be "put down," often as late as early June, his planting season is over.

With the return of warm weather and the drying off of the land, Irish summer begins. May is the first summer month. And by early May the bogs are dry enough to allow turf cutting to begin. The farmer must ordinarily find time between plantings to cut his year's supply of fuel and stack it into "reeks" to dry under the summer warmth. The turf cutting, though not connected with growing plants or animals, is an indispensable farm activity and takes its place among the never varying tasks of the agricultural round.

Once the turf is cut and stacked, the fruits of the farmer's labor begin to appear. His first crop is cabbage which was planted in a small garden near the house at odd free times during the early spring. Cabbage is practically the only green vegetable of the small farm diet, and the old people remember "Hungry July" or July *an chabáiste* when a delayed potato crop might condemn them to a month or more of semistarvation in which cabbage was the only food. Today new varieties of potatoes have been introduced which mature as early as late June.

The mature potatoes mark no harvest. They are left in the ground to be turned out of the ridges with spade or plough as occasion for them demands. Not until late November will the last of them be dug up.

The first true harvest and the most important one of the year is the haymaking. The cutting of hay begins in late July or early August. It is not only the most important activity of the year, insuring a year-long supply of fodder for the farm animals and the income-producing cattle, but it is

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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He or she takes little warming to the task. They were hard times, even "bad times" of famine and death, but the speakers throw a glow of courage and glamour round them. Even the mention of the lack of tools, draft animals, shoes, and many other amenities of present existence evokes comments such as "Weren't they the poor old times?" and "Wasn't it hard the work they had to do in the old days?" Phrases of murmured commiseration and headshaking regret or pity are not without a tinge of pride for listener and teller alike. Remembered necessities in the eyes of the old people who tell the tale are now feats of endurance and strength to which the new generation could never aspire. That is the point for those who tell and those who listen. Where could you get a young man today to walk from Corrofin to Ballinasloe in his bare feet forty miles and back over the stony roads? Where is the woman today who could shoulder a creel turf and carry it a hundred yards out through the bog mud to the famine road before the Board put in the road to the bog above Dunnagore?

Even the meager diet of the old times is remembered with a certain nostalgic pride. An old man, called upon one winter evening, began his remarks upon the theme characteristically:

> In the old days people used to have a maize gruel "stirabout" for breakfast, but you couldn't get any of the young people to eat it now. There was a potato bread, *stampaí*, and it was very good too. The people in the old times had great teeth and, when they died, they would have every one left in their heads. Their teeth would be stronger than a horse's. When the people ate potatoes and bread three times a day, they were healthier and lived to a ripe old age. Now with all the better food, they are not as well.

Such a belief rises very frequently to the lips of the old people who remember the days of the past either in their own or their parents' experience. The implication is clear. The young people, the new generation, are not so strong

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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231 As calves grow up they move from the small farm
241 to the large. It is the large farmer who grazes them
434 until they are ready for the English table. Con-
437 sequently, the local cattle fair is still the small farmer's mart, as it was in the middle ages. The big farmer, on the other hand, sells direct to shippers and exporters. In this system, which represents an immense cattle trade within Ireland, moving cattle endlessly from west to east, from small farms to ranches, and on to their final market in England, the big farmer acts, partly at least, as a commercial middleman or 'processer'. In many ways the 'economic war' with England, which the de Valera government is waging today in an effort to wean Ireland from its dependence upon an English market, is necessarily an attack upon the big farmer. . . .

With all this, it is natural that the small farmers
262 should be different consumers from the rest.
184 They live upon a different diet. They eat very little meat, confining themselves to bacon and occasional poultry. Eggs are a great staple and the potato has only slowly retreated from its place of honour, though the countryman makes sure he shall not allow it to betray him as it did in the time of the Famine. Milk, especially in the form of butter, is consumed more than in any European country. All this the small farmer raises at home. Bread and tea, English invaders of the last century, are now the commonest diet of all, and re-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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present the one staple which he must buy off the farm. This last he shares with the big farmer and the townsman, but otherwise he buys little of the meats and the shop products which fall to the lot of townsman and big farmer.

Neither type of farmer has much use yet for mechanized agriculture as we know it; for both are cattlemen. Nevertheless, the small farmer differs again in the tools he uses. He is the one who clings to hand tools; in poorer districts he must rely upon spade, flail, and scythe. The size of his farm and the poor quality of his land confine him to the manual tools.

Lastly, big farmers and small farmers work their lands quite differently. On the big farm, the farmer-owner uses hired labour. On the small farm, the owner relies upon the united efforts of his family. The countryman's subsistence farming is a family economy in which all members of the family take part—sons, daughters and other relatives. He differs completely in this regard from the large farmer, who is an employer and whose hands are wage earners.

This recitation of the distinguishing marks of peasant economics serves a purpose. It reveals in a roundabout manner what sort of livelihood it is that the countryman wrests from his land. He works a small farm with the help of his family. He raises a small garden of potatoes and a few other foodstuffs which feed both himself and his beasts,

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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462 to butter is her charge. She is an expert at the
512 churn.

Her human charges fed, she must feed the animals in their turn. The full-grown cattle and the horse are not her charge, but she must tend calves and pigs and fowl. Milk and potatoes must be prepared for them all.

Before noon, she hangs a second kettle from the hook. This time she fills it with potatoes for the [262] family. In season, she will add white cabbage, and a portion or two of bacon or salt pork. By the time this is ready the men will be in from the fields impatient for their dinner.

For the men have not been idle. The farmer-father and husband wakes his sons, inspects the cattle and horse, if there is one, and gives them hay and water. If the day is fine, he sallies forth to the fields; if not, and the weather confines him to house and haggard, he has still plenty to do, in building walls, repairing and making machine parts, harness and tools.

Dinner unites the family for the first time since breakfast. Only children of school age are absent and their share of the meal is saved till later. As before, the women and children do not eat till the men have finished. But as the women serve, they [521] all talk about the experiences of the day. It is the chief time of general family conversation. Only the [858] children are silent, for in rural Ireland a well-behaved child is a silent one.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

181 Fleure writes of Wales, another section of "The Celtic Fringe": "the isolated rural communities are, of themselves, poor in material resources, and their efforts have, therefore, not until recently gone into great buildings or sculpture or painting or orchestral music, all demanding a large equipment. Rather have they found their scope in poetry and oratory and song, arts in which the poorest labourer can often compete on fairly equal terms with his richer neighbours. In this way, and in others as well, poverty has been a safeguard of an intensely democratic feeling as well as a help towards the survival of the language and its associations." In the field of human export, too, Ireland's products are scholars, doctors and poets as well as spade-workers.

243 262 114 There are, as we shall try to show, many other features of Irish life which can be related to the pastoral tradition. Because of its value as fodder and for reasons of soil and climate, oats is the "corn" crop of Atlantic Europe. Apart from the value of oats as food for livestock, oatmeal in various forms has been and still is largely consumed, and its baking into thin pan bread over an open fire instead of in an oven has helped to preserve the prehistoric open hearth with its varied 114 and interesting gear and traditions. Ignoring the literary and archæological evidence, many writers have assumed that the inhabitants of ancient Ireland were entirely pastoral and nomadic. On this topic much solemn nonsense has been written, and it gained wide currency because it seemed both to condemn the Irish and to corroborate the prevailing view of man's cultural evolution from hunter to agriculturist through a stage of pastoral nomadism. It now seems certain that man learnt the elements of cultivation at least as soon as he learnt how to domesticate animals, and in the diffusion of these ideas through Europe from the Near East, Ireland received the germs of both sources of food-production at about 114 the same period, let us say 4,000 years ago. There are many 221 signs that in Ireland's dark and middle ages cattle played an even greater role in rural life than in earlier prehistory and later history, but at all times the unit of the fixed family

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 10]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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CHAPTER V.

WOODLANDS, FIELDS, FENCES AND GATES.

We have seen that the Irish landscape, in ancient times very well wooded, is now one of the most treeless in Europe, and we have shown how changes of climate as well as the depredations of livestock made great inroads into the forests. In later centuries many woodlands were destroyed by the English for strategic reasons, while the demands of ship-builders, of charcoal burners, tanners and stave-makers reduced the oakwoods to insignificant proportions. Poor scrub growth was in many areas all that was left. "An oak, an ash, or an elm," wrote Arthur Young of Mitchelstown in Co. Cork, "is almost as great a rarity as an olive, an orange or a mulberry." Ash remains the commonest tree, especially on the limestone of the Central Plain, despite the fondness of cattle for its leaves. We know that its valuable wood was used from the Bronze Age for handles and spear-shafts, and in the Pale it was insisted that "every husbandman having a plough shall set by the year twelve ashes in the ditches and closes of his farm." In the words of Evelyn: "It serves the soldier, the carpenter, the wheelwright, cartwright, cooper, turner and thatcher . . . from the pike, spear and bow to the plough."

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Acorns and hazel nuts were often used as a source of food before the coming of the potato, and almost every tree had its particular uses in a society living on its own resources and

[262]

[p. 39]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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bound by innumerable ties to a countryside richer and fuller than that of to-day. Thus birch, rowan, hazel, thorn, sally and holly all had their special purposes, and yew was in great demand for croziers and shrines. So we might go on down to the humblest lichen (for crottle dye) and the seaweed (Chapter 16). Bog timber, oak and "fir," had many uses—for furniture and implements, for roofs, gates, slide-cars and boat-timber as well as for fir ropes and lighting "splits." Superstitious customs are associated with several of the native trees, especially the rowan, the ash, hazel and whitethorn (Chap. 18).

Sycamore and beech, neither of them native to Ireland, have been extensively planted in recent centuries and grow so well that many have assumed them to be indigenous. The beech loves the well-drained moraines, while the sycamore, one of the few trees which will stand up to the full force of the salt-laden winds, is planted in coastal districts for the shelter it provides: behind its dense summer foliage many a low cabin lies hidden. Its white easily-worked timber is sought by the wood-turner. Formerly the beetling engines of the linen country made a demand for beech and sycamore—the former for the beaters and the latter for the great beam. On steep hillsides which man has been unable to utilize one may still see patches of what may be regarded as wild scrub, a tangle of hazel, ash, black and white thorn, or birch, rowan and alder; but apart from the high-walled demesnes where giant trees are allowed to grow old and rot, the Irish landscape is singularly bare of timber. Visitors from England will notice the poor development of hedgerow trees except for the ash of Co. Meath. This must be attributed largely to the fact that hedge trees have to grow in raised banks or "ditches," as they are called. Hedges and trees are very rarely planted on the level, for the ditch-tradition is older than the hedge. To quote Young once more: "I never saw a single capital tree growing on these banks." But there is some compensation, in autumn, in the wealth of blackberries which they produce (Fig. 10).

Travellers of the early 19th century constantly refer to landscapes without a single tree or shrub or any trace of

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

rush-light holders with attached candle-sockets. The dipped rushes were sometimes plaited together to make the light last longer. It is of interest to note that the war-time shortage of oil and candles has led to a revival of the use of rush-lights in some country districts. 373 416

A great amount of interesting information might be collected about the food of the Irish peasantry, the methods of cooking, times of meals and the many customs and superstitions connected with food and drink. We may close this chapter with a few remarks about some foods other than bread It is curious to reflect that the diet of some western districts, "potatoes for 10 months and Indian meal for two," is so largely dependent on crops of New World origin! Potatoes were made tasty with "kitchen" or "point," that is a bit of relish such as a salted herring; and in difficult times they were only half boiled so that the hard core, called the "moon" or "bone," might prolong the processes of digestion. In Ulster the name given to July was "the blue month" because it was a time of scarcity between the old potatoes and the new crop, but generally speaking milk products were consumed during the summer months. Meat, by which the countryman means beef, was often salted down and reserved for winter use, but meat eating tended to be restricted to certain seasons or festivals such as Christmas, Shrove and Easter. 262 [25] [25]

Another seasonal food was the "sowens" or porridge made from soured "meal-seeds" sifted from the oatmeal. It was traditionally eaten at Hallowe'en; and the Irish name for the 1st of November is Samhain, or "Sowin." I have heard this dish nicknamed "water bewitched." The thin liquid resulting from steeping the fine meal-dust was also drunk and called "thewin," a substitute for buttermilk. A kind of whey ("troander") was made by mixing sweet milk and buttermilk, and "drammock" was a harvest drink consisting of raw oatmeal and water. Then there is the boxty bread made from potato flour and cooked on the griddle. Many traditional foods and drinks are now little more than memories and of some, for instance "heather beer," the country folk say that "the secret has been lost." But one might still

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

262 make a long list of the plants and herbs which are gathered and dried for use as simples. In some areas, for example Tyrone and Derry, it is recorded that the cattle used to be
237 bled in summer, " in a smooth place, each layer of coagulating
262 blood being strewn with salt until a little mound was formed, which was cut up in squares and laid by for use as food in the scarce time of the year." In Wicklow (1780) " they bleed their horses and cows, and mix the blood with meal for food."
273 In the days before sugar was known honey played a considerable part in domestic economy and mead or metheglin, made from honey, was once a popular beverage. We have no knowledge of the period when whiskey distillation was first practised but stills and worms of some antiquity have been found in the bogs, and it is natural to correlate the popularity of whiskey and poteen with the dampness of the climate. A fact worth recording is that until recently illicit stills were made and kept in repair by travelling tinkers in whom it is perhaps not extravagant to see shades of the skilled craftsmen of the later Bronze Age who made cauldrons out of sheet bronze (*cf.* Fig. 5).

252 Far into the historic period heated stones were employed in cooking and it may be that memories of this old method linger on. The nearest thing I have seen is the custom of plunging a hot poker into cow's milk to " singe it " when it is given to lambs. The explanation offered was that this made its taste resemble that of sheep's milk.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

cut with toothed sickles in spring: as in parts of Connacht great rafts of cut seaweed, bound with a rope or with a sugán of wrack, are floated ashore on the flood tide. Seaweed is highly valued as a manure for potatoes on the sandy soils of low-lying coasts—"the potatoes are well-salted before they are gathered"—and it is said to swell the tubers so that they can be readily peeled by machinery. Since in addition the watery potatoes absorb little fat in frying, they are in great demand by the fish-and-chip shops: the export from south Down, for instance, goes largely to the mining districts of south Wales.

Fig. 102.

Fig. 103.
Scale as for Fig. 102.

Some seaweeds are boiled and fed to cattle, other varieties are considered good for pigs, while several kinds are gathered for human consumption:—the strong-tasting dulse, dried and sold in sea-side shops and fairs, purple laver (sloke) and carrageen. I have no evidence for Ireland, but Pennant states that the goatherds of nearby Jura used to make cheese without salt, "lapped in tang and salted with the ashes of sea tang."

Shell-fish of many species—especially winkles—are gathered for home use and are exported in large quantities to England. Young and old may be seen gleaning among the stones at spring tides, and I have known large families who are almost wholly dependent on this ancient strand-collecting life. The larger shells such as mussels and scallops had a variety of uses in the home. Crabs and lobsters caught in rock-holes might be included here, but the "lobster-pot" gets most of this harvest of the sea. Several types of pot are in use. In the north the round-topped netted frame has gained ground generally, but the stronger wicker pots (Fig. 104) are retained for crabs and for trapping bait. In the west the old styles hold their own while a cylindrical variety, probably of French origin, is found on the south coast. Mr. Brian O'Kelly informs me that the lobster-fishermen of west Cork prefer the round wicker pot, but that the netted frame is used in the south-east in addition to the cylindrical variety. The netted frame differs from the type found in the north in that the entrance is on top or at one end instead of at the side.

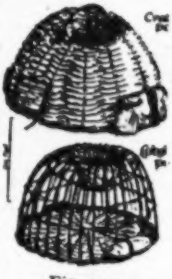
Fig. 104.
Upper, Antrim.
Lower, Kerry.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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Malformations are scarce, but as mentioned before (p. 323), arrest of growth of the pinna of the left ear was observed in one instance; and a boy with talipes equino-varus was seen near Westquarter; but his condition was said not to be congenital, but acquired as the result of an accident. 164 732

Herniæ have been of pretty frequent occurrence of late years, Dr. Hart having seen six cases since 1888, before which date he had no record of having observed any cases of it. Of these six, four were of inguinal hernia, three on the right side, and one on the left, one was a left femoral, and one, in a female child, umbilical. The sudden occurrence of so many cases in succession would seem to indicate some cause of recent origin; what this may be it is difficult to see, but it is ascribed by some to the new style of work required for the building of the fish-curing station, piers, and other relief work, requiring the lifting of heavy weights. 164 [464] [483]

Fevers.—Measles and scarlet fever have not been seen for some time. Some years ago there was an outbreak of enteric fever in Middlequarter, when a large proportion of the population of the hamlet were attacked by it, and there were several deaths.

"*Constitutional*" *diseases.*—Phthisis, though not common, is sometimes met with; and strumous affections, abscesses, &c., are not unfrequently seen, though not very numerous on the whole. The only wonder is that these affections are not more common, as the sanitary state of the houses is not by any means good; and it must be mainly due to their open-air life that they do not suffer more. Malignant disease is said to be unknown. Rheumatism, especially in the form of lumbago, is a very common complaint, but the acute form is rare. [364]

Dietetic Diseases.—These, with rheumatism and bronchitis, form the great majority of all the affections met with; the large extent to which fish and potatoes enter into their dietary may have something to do with this, but there can be no doubt that the use, or abuse, of tea must bear a certain amount of the blame. The most common forms of complaint are flatulence and constipation. As might be expected from the fact of fish forming a large part of the every-day food of the people, ento-parasites are among the most common of all troubles, about every tenth case applying for treatment being due to them. *Ascaris lumbricoides* is the worm most frequently found. 164 262

Respiratory Diseases.—Phthisis has been before alluded to; bronchitis and pneumonia are not uncommon in the winter months. 164

Local affections are but few, and those not very serious. *Eyes.*—Phlyctenular ophthalmia is not very common. *The teeth* are usually [142]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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monotonous chant of three or four lines; the last phrase of each line was very often *go deo deo-deo* (= for aye, aye, aye), the vowel sound of *o* easily accommodating itself to the prolonged chant. Another termination was *nios-mó-mó-mó* (= no more, more, more). I still recollect one touching line of the dirge: it was—*tá mo theachín follamh go deo-deo-deo*, 'my little house is empty for evermore, more, more.' Unfortunately, I know nothing about music, but the chant reminded me of the fourth line of the old air of 'The Blackbird.'"

Owing to the stone of the island not being easily worked the grave-stones are usually rough, shapeless slabs, or are rudely chipped into the form of a cross, while the rest of the grave is covered with flat stones.

A large number of the men formerly went as harvesters to England and Scotland, where some of the young girls still go as servants; but very few do so now, though they say the harvesting paid well. It is more the fashion now to go to America even for a few years; and instances have occurred of people shutting up their houses, leaving all their furniture and utensils as they were, going off to the United States for three or four years, and then coming back, resuming possession, and falling into all the old ways and customs as if nothing very unusual had occurred. It is quite a common occurrence for young men to go to America for seven or eight years (generally to the neighbourhood of Pittsburg to work at the foundries there), at the end of that time to return home, settle down, and get married. Many of the girls go to Scotland, as servants, for five or six months of the year to assist their parents at home.

3. *Food.*—The dietary is much more varied than that of many of the inhabitants of the inland districts; it consists largely of fish of various kinds, potatoes, and home-made bread. Flesh meat is rarely tasted except at Christmas or some other great occasion, when a little mutton may be eaten, but fowl and geese are occasionally used. The fish which forms the staple of the diet is eaten fresh in spring and summer time, and large supplies of it are salted and dried in the sun for the winter's use; the kinds cured are mainly ling, sea-bream, and glassan.

Butter and cheese are not used; and eggs, though forming part of the regular food, are mostly employed as a purchasing medium for tea, sugar, tobacco, &c., at the principal shop, whence they are forwarded to Westport.

Tea has come greatly into use, and is taken in large quantities with

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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241 A cruel custom is said to have been common in the district at one
231 time, which was still in use in 1835, of harrowing with the harrow fastened to the horses tail.

The females of a family sleep in the "room," the men in the bed
513 in the kitchen; if the family be large, the beds will be very full, the occupants lying "heads and points," as several of my informants phrased it, that is, some with their heads in the ordinary place, others with theirs to the foot of the bed. No night-clothing is worn by either sex among the poorer people.

A method of sleeping when the house was much crowded was formerly practised in this district, which is fully described by a writer[1] who has been frequently quoted in this Report:—"This is what is called sleeping in *stradoge*, and *is regulated* as follows:—The floor is thickly strewed with fresh rushes, and stripping themselves entirely, the whole family lie down at once and together, covering themselves with blankets if they have them, if not, with their day-clothing, but they lie down *decently*, and in order; the eldest daughter next the wall farthest from the door, then all the sisters according to their ages; next the mother, father, and sons in succession, and then the
[334] strangers, whether the travelling pedlar, or tailor, or beggar; thus the strangers are kept aloof from the female part of the family, and if there be apparent community, there is great propriety of conduct."

3. *Food.*—The dietary varies somewhat with the locality, but
● 262 fish seems to form a considerable part of it in all but the mountainous portions of the district. Flesh or fowl are rarely tasted, except at Christmas time, or at Michaelmas, or some other great occasion. The islanders are said to make some use of sea birds, but use fish as the staple animal food. This is eaten fresh in summer, and coarsely salted for winter use.

The main articles of diet are stirabout, soda-bread, and boxty (a form of damper made of grated raw potatoes, and cooked on a griddle. This extremely indigestible form of bread is much used in the mountainous parts), potatoes, and tea, which is becoming more
[272] extensively used than formerly, and is now taken at nearly every meal. Whatever the other meals may be composed of, fish forms part of supper.

An average day's dietary in the Mullet would be somewhat as follows:—

262 *Breakfast.*—Potatoes and fish, or Indian meal (sometimes oatmeal)
264 stirabout, buttermilk.

[1] C. O., "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley," p. 34.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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Dinner.—Tea and soda-bread, or fish and potatoes. 262

Supper.—Fish and potatoes, with buttermilk as a beverage, or 264
stirabout and milk.

In the mountainous parts, potatoes and stirabout form, with tea and boxty, the larger part of the dietary. In this region also the poorer families do not usually take more than two meals a day during the winter months.

Butter, cheese, and eggs are but very little used, the eggs being [439]
exported, and in some remote parts sometimes bartered to the small [437]
dealers for tea, sugar, or tobacco, instead of being sold for money.

In many parts a good deal of poteen is consumed, as illicit dis- 273
tilling, though much less common than formerly, still prevails to a considerable extent.

4. *Clothing.*—When seen in their holiday dress the people appear 291
to be well dressed, and almost over-clothed; but the everyday working-dress is, among the poorer part of the population, often of a very non-descript, not to say ragged, character.

At first sight there does not seem to be much homespun worn, but on closer inspection a great deal of it appears to be still in use, but to be made up in modern style. It is usually dyed blue, but a good deal of it is a natural grey made by mixing black and white wool, and which, as it does not fade, is much in use. The costume of the men varies much; the old swallow-tailed coat with the metal buttons is now seldom seen, being replaced by more modern patterns. The trousers are either homespun or corduroy. Hats and caps of all [439]
shapes are worn; they are usually purchased in Belmullet from local [444]
shopkeepers who import them. Many of the men, on working days, wear shirts of a thick, white, homespun flannel.

The men of Inishkea still retain a distinctive attire, their dress being composed of a navy-blue homespun, of which shirt, vest, and trousers are made; many wear a loose blouse or frock of the same material, which they prefer to "shop cloth," as they say it is warmer, wears longer, and stands sea water better; it is certainly more picturesque.

A great deal of second hand clothing is sold on fair days to the [443]
poorer class of people by "Cheap Jacks," who dispose of their wares by a sort of Dutch auction.

The men wear boots in every-day dress, but the women and children do so only on Sundays, market-days, and holidays. It is a common custom for women going to market in Belmullet to walk barefooted, carrying their boots in their baskets until they reach the outskirts of

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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The effect of the evil eye is much dreaded, and illness and misfortune are ascribed to it; for this reason, a child or an animal should not be praised without saying "God bless it," to avert misfortune. To counteract this influence, human beings may be spit upon, or the sign of the cross made on them in the name of the Trinity. Cattle sometimes have knot-charms tied to their tails. 777 789

Many animals have beliefs or customs connected with them. A fox should not be interfered with by the people in his neighbourhood, or he will revenge himself by raids on their fowls; if well treated he will do no damage. 825

Seals are thought by some to be enchanted men or transmigrated souls, and for this reason are not molested. A man at Portacloy asserted that it was unlucky to kill seals, and added, as a warning, that he knew a man, a relative of his own, who went into a cave to slay a seal, and on raising his club to strike it, saw the animal change into a large frog. He did not, however, seem to have any very great faith in his own story, as a few minutes afterwards he offered to sell a sealskin.

It is believed also that on some nights seals assume human shape, and that a number of them gather together on the rocks and wail aloud.

C. O. states that the people of Tip were reputed by their neighbours to be "peculiar" because they ate seals' flesh. [262]

The soil of Inishglora is thought to be so fatal to rats that if one of these animals be brought to the island it will die as soon as it touches the soil, and a handful of sand from the island will perfectly protect a house against this kind of vermin. [823]

A black hen used, on some occasions (and may perhaps be still) to be buried alive with its wings spread out to bring about a fair wind or some desired good fortune. [821]

Ghosts and apparitions are fully believed in. Two instances of the spirits of drowned persons being seen walking about are reported to have occurred within the past year; one of these was said to have occurred near Blacksod, where the ghost of a sailor was seen on the sea-shore. An apparation in the form of a black dog is sometimes seen by belated travellers not far from Portacloy. About half-a-mile outside Belmullet and within the peninsula of the Mullet, there is a mound in a field by the roadside; this is raised over the bodies of some of the peasantry who were slain in a combat with the yeomanry (known as the battle of Meenane Creve), in the year 1793. At this spot the ghost of a young man without a head is seen sitting upon the 775

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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of certain acts in the hope of inducing success in similar fields of action, provides an explanation of many of the folk-practices with which we are concerned.

Pushed too far, however, the observance of such antiquated practices in the end defeated its purpose and threatened the extinction of traditional life. A clue to much of the paradox in Irish culture is to be found in the reaction which follows an adherence to custom carried beyond the breaking-point. Spade-labour for example has reluctantly given way to the plough, but once the plough is generally accepted the spade becomes a despised implement so that a vegetable garden is a rare thing, at best a tiny plot left to the care of the women. In another field, the substitution of the vilest American films for the traditional ceilidhe gathering is a sad change. The crisis of the Great Famine was a major turning-point, and there followed a general reaction against everything associated with it. This was particularly true of the Irish peasants who sought refuge across the Atlantic: the American immigrants, driven from the land by extreme poverty, were determined to have nothing more to do with it and became almost invariably town-dwellers. The donkey and the goat, symbols of poverty, are neglected and despised in many parts of Ireland. A Donegal crofter once told me he dare not keep a donkey for fear of being unable to marry off his daughters: instead he kept a horse, though he could ill afford one, for its prestige value. The dangerously monotonous diet of Irish countryfolk, also, can be explained in the light of the famine. So bitter is the folk-memory of these times that useful wild sources of food are now neglected and despised; for example, wild berries of all kinds, the ubiquitous eel, hare and rabbit; the cresses and the edible seaweeds and fungi. It should be added, however, that some of these foods were apparently tabu—the rabbit, an Anglo-Norman invader, was rarely eaten—and that the potato had played its part in debasing diet in the period before the famine.[1]

Perhaps the most striking example of reaction is to be found in the expressed desire of most country people to have an isolated dwelling-house. The clachan or hamlet, once the centre of communal life and tradition, is despised, a symbol of squabbling

[1]R. N. Salaman, *The History and Social Influence of the Potato* (1949), Ch.15.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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century we find a description from Ulster: 'In the bosom of the Mourne Mountains there is a place called the Deers' Meadow to which great numbers of poor people resort in the summer months to graze their cattle. They bring with them their wives, children and little wretched furniture, erect huts, and there live . . . and often cut their turf.'[1] A century later a fuller account of a more complicated transhumance, reminiscent of the Norwegian seaboard, comes from Donegal: 'It often happens that a man has three dwellings—one in the mountains, another upon the shore, and the third upon an island, he and his family flitting from one to another of these habitations . . . This change usually takes place upon a fixed day, the junior branches of the family generally perform the land journey on the top of the household goods with which the pony may often be seen so loaded, and at the same time so obscured, that little more than the head can be observed; and thus the chair or two, the creels, and the iron pot, the piggin, and the various selected et cetera . . . creep along the roads.'[2] The author goes on to comment on the restrictions imposed on the comfort and possessions of the peasants by their 'Arab mode of life'. In Achill Island too the movements were complicated, involving the entire population which, having moved to the summer pastures and sowed their corn, returned to the permanent coastal village for the high summer to fish and went back to gather the harvest at the booley in the autumn.[3]

For the most part we are dependent on folk tradition for details of booleying. The Ordnance Survey Letters written in the 1830s contain valuable material from Counties Antrim and Londonderry, and the following extract relates to the parish of Dunaghy: 'Some of the very old men of the country recollect seeing the boliehouses inhabited. They were built of sods upon a foundation of earth and stones and were thatched with heath. Many of the poorer sort lived here in summer grazing the cattle upon land that nobody appears to have claimed and supporting themselves upon their milk and blood which they took from

[1] W. Harris, *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Down* (1744), 125.
[2] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 24.
[3] An account by Sir William Wilde, written in 1836, is contained in Wood-Martin, *The Rude Stone Monuments of Ireland* (1888), 238.

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them occasionally. To render the latter more palatable they are said to have mixed it with the leaves of the wild sorrel.'

In Achill a few old people still nostalgically accompany their cows to the old booleying grounds, but everywhere else the system has died out completely. Many hilly districts, however, are open runs for summering stock which are visited periodically or placed in charge of a herd. This system was prevalent in the early nineteenth century and is thus described in the Ordnance Survey Letters for County Londonderry, parish of Upper Cumber. 'Herds are partially employed, males and females indiscriminately, who tend the cattle in the summer on the moors and mountain farms. They are from ten to sixteen years old and are paid for that half year from 15s. to 21s. In winter they return to their parents, who are burdened with their support from November to May.' In theory the total number of grazing units in a commonage is calculated and the units allotted to each landholder in proportion to the size of his farm—originally to his share in the openfield. The unit is known as a collop (in Ulster and Mayo a sum—the Scottish equivalent) and is the amount of pasturage that will support a cow. The sums may be taken up by other animals, and a scale which varies slightly from one district to another gives the equation. Thus a sum equals three parts of a horse, four sheep, eight goats or twenty geese. With the decline in the utilization of the hill-pastures and the general breakdown of traditional practices, grazing rights on commonages are neglected and stinting is rarely operative.

The observant walker in the hills will notice in sheltered hollows by the banks of streams clusters of grassy mounds set in a green sward, or it may be small piles of stones under some rocky outcrop. These are the only tangible relics of the booley houses, and in most parts of Ireland they were deserted so long ago that the shepherd will tell you they are the remains of Danes' houses.

Only where the huts were stone-built are the remains easily recognizable. In Achill Island they are oval in shape, or rectangular with rounded corners, and many have the opposite doorways which are still characteristic of the winter dwellings. In some bogland areas where place-names and traditions tell

Barnstaple in Devon. The oven-pot may be suspended over the fire but in the south rests on a trivet: the lid is dished so that live turves may be placed on top. It is used also for bread-baking, though the griddle is most commonly employed for this purpose (Fig. 24). 415

FIG. 24. Oven-pot, griddle and trivet

Here we come to a fundamental fact in the geography of the Irish hearth—the absence of the built-in oven. The one exception which proves the rule is its occurrence in the extreme south-east, where, in Co. Wexford, the baronies of Bargy and Forth have retained many features dating from their English settlement in medieval times. Over most of Ireland even when a cooking-range is installed in the hearth, the oven is not used for bread-baking, for oven-bread is not a native food. In central Europe on the other hand the bread-oven, originally of clay, is of great antiquity and the stone or metal oven has come to dominate the fireplace. The difference in bread-types is related on the one hand to environment and economic organization and on the other hand to a whole set of eating habits and ethical values. 354 [262] [171]

Thin bread, or bread in cakes, made without yeast, has been from early times the common bread in most parts of Atlantic Europe, from North Scandinavia to the Basque Country, including Highland Britain and Ireland. Farther afield it is typical of many Mediterranean areas and parts of Asia. In north-western Europe it is closely linked with the cultivation of oats, though home-baked wheaten bread is made in the same way and mixtures with maize and with potatoes are similarly prepared. Potato bread (fadge), a mixture of wheat flour and boiled potatoes, is a popular food which surely had its origins in difficult times. 262 252 171

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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252 As throughout Highland Britain it was the dramatic fall in the
262 price of wheat in the 1880s, thanks to imports from America,
171 that changed the eating habits of the people and led to a decline in the consumption of oaten and barley bread. The commercial baking of oven-bread from imported wheat is thus a fairly recent development virtually confined to the large towns, especially the milling ports, and its distribution through the rural areas explains the ubiquitous bread-vans of the country roads. We should probably make an exception of the English-settled parts of the east coast in the Pale as well as in Bargy. Dublin and Drogheda have a rare advantage in Ireland in that, thanks to their relatively dry climate, grain need not be kiln-dried before milling. The town bakeries cater for country tastes by providing an extraordinary variety of cakes and farls as well as
[256] standard loaves. One of the big Belfast bakeries turns out some seventy varieties of plain and fancy bread which are distributed over several Ulster counties. In the Scottish Highlands, similarly, most of the bread consumed comes from a Glasgow factory: home-made, even locally-made, yeast-bread is almost
[493] unknown. 'The van' is therefore one of the necessities of life: its forerunner was the tea-van, famous for its fast high-stepping horses, once a familiar sight in the Irish countryside.

262 The baking of thin bread has steadily declined under this
252 urban competition. White bread and stewed tea are woefully inadequate as a staple diet but there were perhaps greater gastric evils in indigestible soda bread made with unboiled water from surface wells. The use of buttermilk and above all a large consumption of butter were, however, traditional. On balance the housewife has profited, for she was truly the slave of the fire. Thin bread has the disadvantage of going stale quickly, and a good housewife was expected always to have fresh bread ready. Labourers have been known to refuse to work on farms where there was not a daily baking of bread. The baking board or trough hung ready to hand on the wall,
251 and the meal was stored near the fire to keep it dry (Figs. 18
[857] and 21). Old people have told me how, when they were children, they were called on periodically to tramp the meal in its wooden chest or ark, treading it down with bare feet to drive out the air and lessen the risk of its going musty. In Wales the meal-

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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chest was considered to be the best place to store a well-dried ham. 251

Originally the flat round oatcakes were baked on a flat stone, and such flagstone griddles continued to be used in the nineteenth century in parts of Co. Kerry. A late seventeenth-century traveller wrote: 'Their general food is a thin oatcake which they bake upon a broad flat stone made hot, a little sheep's milk cheese, or goat's milk, boiled leeks and some roots.'[1] In Yorkshire the flagstone was built-in over a separate fire and gave way slowly to the iron 'bakestone'. The bread was hardened in front of the fire, resting against a three-legged 'bread-stick' of the type shown in Fig. 25. Representations of bread on the sculptured high crosses of the Early Middle Ages show just such round discs. The traditional form of thin bread, however, is the farl (fardel), shaped like a quarter-circle. The large circular cake is marked with a cross so that it can be readily broken into quarters (farls) after baking and hardening. The 'harning' is done on a wrought iron 'harnen stand' or toaster which has taken the place of the simple bread-stick. It is worth noticing that the Beltane cakes, formerly eaten at the fires which were lit on hill-tops on May Eve, were baked, in Scotland at any rate, before the fire without touching iron.[2] I have seen a few examples of carved stone breadstands which were designed to bake the bread in front of the fire, and no doubt rough stones were originally used for this purpose. The baking stones are elaborately carved and often carry dates ranging, in Scottish examples, from 1674 to 1791.[3] Irish examples seem to be confined to Ulster and they probably represent one of the many culture traits introduced from Scotland (Fig. 25, 6). The wrought iron toasters are tastefully designed and exhibit a great variety of ornament. Specimens from north Ulster and from Scotland display an almost Spanish exuberance in the intricacies of their spiral terminals, and one would like to know if they have their counterparts along the Atlantic coasts of Europe. They are now for the most part museum pieces, for one rarely sees them in use and great numbers have found their way to the scrap heap in the last half century.

252 354 171 [262]

[1] 'A Tour in Ireland in 1672–74', *J.C.H.A. Soc.* x (1904), 96.
[2] J. M. McPherson, *Primitive Beliefs in the North-east of Scotland* (1929).
[3] A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present* (1880), 239.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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much scorn from English observers as did 'ploughing by the tail' and other archaic customs. In fact it seems to have been associated with tail-ploughing and certain other practices and would thus represent a very ancient cultural substratum which it was once fashionable to call Pictish. It was sufficiently prevalent in the seventeenth century to justify the passing of an Act of Parliament forbidding it, in 1635. 'The wild Irish', writes Fynes Moryson, 'do not thresh their oats, but burn them from the straw and so make cakes thereof.'[1] A fuller description comes from Martin Martin's famous account of the Western Isles: 'The ancient way of dressing corn . . . is called Graddan, from the Irish word Grad, which signifies quick. A woman sitting down, takes a handful of corn, holding it by the stalks in her left hand, and then sets fire to the ears, which are presently in a flame; she has a stick in her right hand . . . beating off the grain at the very instant when the husk is quite burnt, for if she miss of that, she must use the kiln. The corn may be so dressed, winnowed, ground, and baked within an hour after reaping from the ground.'[2] Graddan bread was esteemed for its sweetness. Burstin is the Shetland name for corn dried in this way, or by rolling hot stones among it, or sometimes by deliberately roasting the grain in a kettle.

The taste for butter which makes the Irish consumption per head one of the highest in the world recalls the traditional place of 'whitemeats' in the diet. The Foreign Agricultural Circular of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (October 1955) giving the *per capita* consumption of dairy products for various countries in 1954, shows that the Republic of Ireland is second only to New Zealand in butter consumption, but on the basis of milk and milk products Ireland comes first, with a *per capita* consumption of 1,425 lb. The explanation is to be found not in a large consumption of milk—here Ireland ranks eighth—but in the low average fat content of Irish milk. Nevertheless the *per capita* consumption of butter is extremely high, 41 lb. per annum, as compared with 14 lb. in the United Kingdom and 9 lb. in the U.S.A. Butter spread thickly on fresh bread is a tasty if simple food, and one suspects that in pre-famine times

[1] Fynes Moryson, *The Description of Ireland*, 229.
[2] Martin Martin, *The Western Isles* (1703), (1934 ed., 244).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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262 the staple was butter and oatcake rather than oatcake and butter. When bread was made from gritty quern-ground flour the butter would have served as a lubricant to assist the swallowing process. 'They swallow lumps of butter mixed with oatmeal', wrote Fynes Moryson about the year 1600, 'and love no meat more than sour milk curdled.'[1] When food was left out for the fairies it was generally oatmeal and butter: needless to say, particularly when accompanied by whiskey, it disappeared during the night. In the very high present-day Irish consumption of milk products we notice once more the survival of ancient custom, for milk products were the staple food of medieval times in all parts of the British Isles.[2] The Irish laws distinguish between summer and winter food, and the consumption of meat was almost confined to the winter months. Pork was the most highly esteemed meat, but no doubt deer and other products of the chase augmented the fare for the upper classes. Surplus cattle were presumably killed off at
251 Martinmas and salted as 'marts', but among the peasantry the emphasis was on milch cows, and cow's meat was fit only for stews. Butter—and whiskey also—was preserved in bogs to be available in the lean days of spring (Chapter XIV). On the other
234 hand there is little evidence of cheese-making apart from soft cheese, including that made from sheep's milk, and the Irish consumption of cheese is today probably the lowest in Europe. The making of hard cheese is a comparatively late development everywhere, so that Ireland may be said once more to have remained faithful to ancient practice. With a *per capita* consumption of 2·7 lb. in 1954, the Irish republic comes last in the fifteen countries for which figures are given in the U.S. Foreign Agricultural Circular quoted above; the highest is Norway with 19 lb. per head. I may add that I have found no record or tradition of the milking of sows which occurs in parts of Spain and which, it is suggested, may have been a Celtic custom.[3] It is said in Ireland that if a man drinks sow's milk he can see the wind for ever after.

[1]Fynes Moryson, *The Manners and Customs of Ireland*, 321.
[2]J. C. Drummond and A. Wilbraham, *The Englishman's Food* (1939), 51.
[3]R. U. Sayce, 'Milking and Dairying', *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 51 (1951–52), 120–54.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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POTS AND PANS

Despite certain conservative elements it must be recognized that very great changes have taken place in the Irishman's diet in recent centuries. Tea and the potato, invaders from east and west, have largely replaced whitemeats, although another more recent pair of intruders, maize-meal and rice, distributed by the British government during the famine, have made no such conquest. Dr. Salaman has fully discussed the depressing effects of the potato on diet and culture.[1] Unless one has seen a peasant family sitting down to a meal of boiled potatoes it is hardly possible to credit the consumption figures. It used to be reckoned that a stone a day was the allowance for a labourer, and it was 'by no means uncommon, in times of plenty, for a labourer to eat 14 lb. of potatoes at a meal'.[2] An average consumption of 8 lb. per day for each member of a family is well authenticated. It is not surprising that there was a general craving for 'kitchen', tasty relishes such as strong butter when this bulky, starchy and monotonous food came to dominate the Irish diet. There seems to have been an expansion of sea fishing to keep pace with the demand for 'kitchen'. Down to recent times salt fish were hawked through the autumn countryside by noisy 'cadgers', and the careful housewife would have a barrel or two of salt herrings put by for the winter. One is reminded of the 'relishes' with which many African peoples relieve the monotony of a diet of mealies.

One of the many Irish customs which the English found revolting was the bleeding of cattle. Fynes Moryson wrote: 'they often let their cows' blood, eating the congealed blood with butter'.[3] Arthur Young notes that in Wicklow 'they bleed their horses and cows, and mix the blood with meal for food'.[4] In Ulster cattle were bled 'in a smooth place, the coagulating blood being strewn with salt until a little mound was formed. This was cut up into squares and 'laid by for use as food in the scarce time of the year'.[5] Unfortunately few details of the bleeding operation have come down to us though I have been told that it was customary to close the wound with a cloven stick.

[1] R. N. Salaman, *The History and Social Influence of the Potato* (1949), chs. 11–18.
[2] I. Weld, *Roscommon* (1832), 429.
[3] Fynes Moryson, *The Manners and Customs of Ireland*, 321.
[4] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 69.
[5] C. Otway, *Sketches in Erris and Tyrawly* (1841), 353.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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262 231 In some parts of the country the blood was made into puddings. Sheep's blood, in this case caught at the slaughtering, is used for making blood puddings in parts of the south, and black puddings made from pig's blood are popular in other parts of the country. I believe one might divide Ireland into two regions according to the popularity of black and white puddings, but I would hesitate to demarcate the border!

264 A great deal of information could be collected on local and festive foods and on food substitutes which were resorted to in famine years. The traditional times and names of meals also offer a fruitful field of investigation and they should be listed before new fashions entirely replace them. In many parts of the country only two meals were taken, at morning and evening, a fact to be remembered when considering the colossal quantities of food that were consumed at a meal, but it should be added that there were times when little food of any kind was available to the poorer people.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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springs when fodder was scarce cattle, sheep and horses found edible seaweed on the shore. Scottish planters in Co. Down found that their sheep 'kept fat and wholesome all winter and spring by feeding on the oare.'[1] This is nowadays one of nature's neglected resources partly, no doubt, owing to enclosure and the loss of grazing rights. It has been claimed as the result of experiments that the feeding value of *Ascophyllum nodosum* (knob wrack), which grows towards high tide mark, is almost equal to that of meadow hay. Certain species of seaweed are still, however, gathered for human consumption—carrageen or Irish moss (*Chondrus crispus*) sloke or laver (*Porphyra*), dulse (*Rhodymenia*) and dulaman (probably chanelled weed)—whether as medicine or 'kitchen', that is a tasty morsel to be chewed between meals, or boiled to be eaten with potatoes. In lean times the kitchen might become the staple, and a writer in the 1830's stated that when the potatoes gave out 'hundreds of the people may be seen going to the seaside to gather dulaman.'[2] Carrageen, besides being made into a jelly possessing many virtues, was used as a thickener for milk.

The most profitable way of exploiting seaweed down to recent times was for the burning of kelp, which became a considerable business among shore-dwellers in the eighteenth century as the growth of industry stimulated the production of soap, bleaching materials and glass: more recently kelp was chiefly in demand for the preparation of iodine. But there are dimly remembered ways of utilizing seaweed ashes in the home which would make kelp-burning a traditional occupation. In the Western Isles of Scotland kelp-burning is said to have been introduced from Ireland about 1735, but there too it must have been an ancient custom, for Martin Martin tells us at the end of the seventeenth century that seals, seafowl and fish were preserved in 'the ashes of burnt seaware'.[3] (Cheese, we learn, was preserved in the same way, or 'lapped in tang'). Kelp was made by burning the thick stems of tangle (*Laminaria*) or other coarse weeds—to which, as well as to the ashes, the name kelp is applied—which are thrown up in the winter storms or

[1] W. Montgomery, *Description of Ardes Barony* (1683), 139.
[2] J. Binns, *Miseries and Beauties*, 1, 50.
[3] Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 135, 159.

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226 [415] [386] Scallop shells were put to many uses and were often a substitute for the iron oil-pan of the open-wicked crusie. Seashells were also burnt to make lime for whitewashing the houses.

● [262] In late summer the sprat come ashore in vast numbers on the west and south coasts, so that in Donegal 'they constituted the chief food of the peasantry during three or four months of the year.'[1] They were taken from the water in buckets and sieves, and the mackerel pursuing their prey close against the rocks might be caught almost as easily. In Waterford harbour there were specially erected wickerwork head weirs to take the sprat; and Dr. Went has described a wattled sprat-weir in working order in the estuary of the Blackwater.[2] Fishing from the rocks, too, is most popular in harvest time and though now little more than a pastime it once provided a reserve of food for the winter. About hay-harvest the ballan wrasse is at its best, 'when the flags (wild iris) are in bloom', they say. Known as bavin, byan, morran and by other names, it is now despised nearly everywhere, as is the coalfish which was salted and dried [192] and which has different names in Gaelic for every stage of its growth to demonstrate its former importance and popularity. 'Glassan' oil was the luminant for the crusie lamps in Rathlin Island. On the north coast you may see anglers 'frassing' for small coalfish, that is attracting them by spitting into the water chewed potatoes or limpets. Formerly ground bait was made [412] by pounding limpets in rock basins of the type known as 'bullauns' (Fig. 90). Occasionally you may come across a fisherman casting a feather lure for pollack with a line made wholly or in part of horsehair. One method of twisting these lines, with quills, will be described in the following chapter. For short lengths next the hook—the fine foot-lines—white hair is preferred, and I have seen it made in County Down by [283] twisting the hair between the bare thigh and a hand dusted with wood ash, a method practised by 'primitives' in many parts of the world. Two strands of from fifteen to twenty hairs are twisted on each other. (The anglers in the Seine at Paris are also said to prefer a 'crop' made from a grey mare's tail.) To

[1] 'Kinnfaela', *The Cliff Scenery of South-Western Donegal*, 19.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *Antiquity*, 25 (1951), 32–35.

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come across surviving examples of these ancient devices. The iron 'cribs' associated with modern salmon weirs, however, appear to derive from wattled traps. And the long conical 'coghill' nets in which the eels are caught in the weirs of the Bann, the Shannon and (until recently) the Erne, are shaped like weels and indeed they are sometimes built up of a series of cones. The fine meshed 'tail' of the net is made to open and the eels, nowadays, are poured directly into submerged tanks. A detail suggestive of long custom is that the 'skiver' with which the tail is closed in the coghills of the weirs at Portna on the Bann consists of a perforated rib-bone of horse or cow. The pin is attached to a cord, which is wound round the end of the net and secured by thrusting the pin into the windings. The walls of the weirs are often still built of wattles, and the old style of weir on the Erne consists of a base of large stones into which the wattled superstructure is thrust.[1]

The wattles are known on the Bann as *sleaghs*: of the six weirs now fishing there four are of the traditional type and two have been modernized. At Athlone on the Shannon there were twenty-two eel weirs in the early seventeenth century, and nearly all were still working in the nineteenth century: a single weir is now fished there.[2] The eel weirs of the River Erne had been reduced to five when they were abandoned owing to the recent construction of a dam for the Ballyshannon hydro-electric scheme. The Bann silver eel fisheries are probably the largest of their kind in western Europe, and it is significant that the Bann is one of the richest rivers in Europe for archaeological discoveries ranging in date from the Mesolithic to the early medieval period. Both salmon and eels have now become money-crops and the catches are exported. Already in the eighteenth century Irish salt salmon was exported in considerable quantities to America. The ice-house in which salmon used to be preserved is one of the many ruined buildings to be seen about the decaying houses of the gentry, and most country houses also had their fish ponds.

Among the common folk eels are esteemed only by the folk who catch them, legally or otherwise, but they were formerly

[1] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 75 (1945), 213–23.
[2] A. E. J. Went, *J.R.S.A.I.*, 80 (1950), 146–54.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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sold fresh in the markets of the Bann Valley, and were salted down for winter use in place of herrings.[1] They have gone the way of most of the pre-famine 'relishes' which came to be despised as the threat of famine faded after the middle of last century. The elvers, too, used to be taken out of the teeming rivers in spring with sieves and pressed into cakes or boiled in milk and made into a kind of eel-cheese. In the River Bann the elvers are now trapped at the first weir, at the tidal limit, and transported upstream, up to 80 million a year being given an easy passage in this way. A marked reduction in the size of the silver eels netted on their return to the sea some ten years later has been interpreted as a result of this interference with nature. The bulk of the eels taken are sold live in the London markets. In addition to elvers salmon fry also was in former times taken for food and fed to pigs, and by an Act of Elizabeth's reign swine were prohibited from feeding on the shores of tidal rivers 'where they destroy a great quantity of salmon and eel fry'.[2]

Many traditional methods of fishing survive on the lakes of the Irish midlands. The otter board, now more often seen along the coast where fishermen trawl for flat fish in sandy bays, was formerly widely used in lake fishing and is considered to be 'an implement of very ancient origin in Ireland'.[3] Related to it is the 'pooka', a board fitted with mast and sail which carried out the baited long lines.[4] Fishing lines were until recently sometimes made of horsehair by an interesting and undoubtedly ancient method. The instruments employed are goose or swan quills, cut down to make open-ended tubes some three inches long, two or three being needed according to whether a two- or three-strand line is being prepared. From ten to twenty long hairs taken from a horse's tail are threaded through each quill and knotted together at one end, the other ends of the quills being plugged with short pieces of quill which grip the hairs yet allow them to slide through. The quills are now rolled one against the other in the fingers, and as the strands twist on one another they pull down the hairs which feed them. The

[1] G. V. Sampson, *Memoir*, 248.
[2] W. Tighe, *Statistical Observations, County of Kilkenny*, 103.
[3] C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy*. See also R. U. Sayce, *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 53 (1954).
[4] W. H. Maxwell, *Wild Sports of the West*, 77.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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The wild cat is believed to have a spike or hook at the end of its tail which it can stick into a pursuer, but I found no such fine legend in Clare on this point as I did near Kenry in Limerick, where the cats pursued, and anchored themselves on, a farmer and his dog, after chasing them from Clorane to Old Kildimo! 825 776

Elk.—The Irish elk is known among the turf cutters of Clooney and Tulla as the "Fiaghmore" (so pronounced, but really *fiadh mor*, big deer),—"it might be one of the deer Finn hunted." Its numerous remains have given to one townland the name "Fiaghmore, Fiah,"[8] in 1655. The "Agallamh"[9] has an interesting allusion. Diarmaid kills a huge deer, and its antler, when resting on his foot, reaches above his head, despite his great height. Caoilte produces this horn from a lake to convince St. Patrick of the truth of his stories of the heroes.

Badger, Squirrel, and Marten.—It is asserted that there are two kinds of badgers,—the "dog-badger," which eats carrion and digs into graves, and the "pig-badger," which is a strict vegetarian and is eatable. In the *Boroma* tract from the *Book of Leinster*,[10] and the "Agallamh," badger bacon and squirrels are mentioned as fit to set before a king or hero. It is doubtful whether the *togmal*, (kept as a pet by Queen Maeve and killed on her shoulder by Cuchullin's slingstone), was a squirrel or a bird, but squirrel skins, along with marten skins, formed a considerable export from Ireland at least from 1230 to 1580, and in 1686 Roderic O'Flaherty names the squirrel amongst the animals of Connaught.[11] The true marten was until recently common in east Clare, and, like the supposed "marten-cat" (a large red domestic cat that has gone wild), was reputed uncanny in my boyhood. I have seen martens at play in the Clare woods in 1869, and had one stuffed in 1876, but they seem now to be extinct. [262]

Hybrids.—Besides the "dog-badger," there were said to be uneatable hybrids of the cat and the rabbit, and of the rook and [262]

[8] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxiv., p. 94.

[9] *Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii., p. 176. Antlers over six feet long have been found in Clare, and there is a fine single antler 6 ft. 2 in. long at Violet Hill, Broadford.

[10] *Revue Celtique*, vol. xiii., p. 47.

[11] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xl., p. 245.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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825 776 [262] the domestic hen. The "soft egg laid by the cock" was looked on with suspicion, and so was the egg of the bat, which was even unlucky to find, and could be used for malignant charms.

Stoat.—In Clare the stoat is always called "weazel." A corruption of the strange Irish name *Feasóg* (the little beard) is as often used, even by English speakers, as the *whishshoge* or *whushshoge*. The creature was equally disliked and respected. It is wished "Good morning, ma'am," by some, and generally saluted by raising the hat on meeting; but others spit and cross themselves. It is regarded as peevish and persistent; "as cross as a bag of weazels" is a proverb in east Clare, while Finn is compared to a weazel in the pursuit of Diarmaid and Grainne. I have heard many stories about its revengefulness "when its nest is killed," and of one of its persistent attempts to get at a corpse in a house in south-east Clare, rather, it was thought, for magical purposes than from hunger. Old belief ascribed to the animal the power of poisoning. At Carnelly a labourer told that when cutting a meadow near the "Druids' Altar"[12] he killed a young weazel. Soon afterwards his wife brought him his dinner and a can of sour milk. While they talked, she cried out that a weazel was spitting into the can, but the man laughed and drank the milk. Soon afterwards he got violent gripes, and gave himself up for lost. The doctor had great difficulty in persuading him to try any remedy, and his wife was almost scandalized by his recovery. A similar tale was told at my old home, Attyflin, in which young weazels were not killed but put on a wisp of grass safely in a bush. The parents were seen spitting into the milk, but, on finding the young ones safe, they returned and upset the can.[13] So "even the weazel has justice." Both stories probably originated in the animal's love for milk.

[775] *Rat.*—A Clare woman told me that a man whose love was rejected by a girl living in Limerick city died, and his soul went into a rat and used to bite her throat until she had to emigrate.[14] The rat tried to follow her and was drowned, and so the persecution ended. A curious "parliament of rats" was held near Durra in

[12] Mrs. O'Callaghan of Maryfort and others.
[13] Late Hugh Massy Westropp.
[14] Mrs. M. MacCormick.

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829 come ashore in the future, for his use of the term poverty when describing Inis Beag life in a series of articles. The islanders, however, constantly complain of their indigence privately and deprecate it and are embarrassed by it in the presence of strangers. Girls and young women are particularly disparaging, and elders are puzzled by this attitude because the lot of youth is so much easier than was that of their mothers and grandmothers. Those persons who extol island existence usually do so in a defensive manner; after conceding that goods are in short supply, albeit "no one suffers from want of food or clothing," they go on to stress the healthy climate of the island, the freedom and independence that they enjoy, the sanctity of Inis Beag and its many saints of the past, and the strength of Catholic belief. Sometimes the advocate is followed by a denunciation of urban life, where these essential characteristics are lacking, or by a recounting of the difficulties being encountered by a relative just arrived in Boston or London.

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233 The subsistence economy of Inis Beag always has been dominated by agricultural pursuits, contrary to frequent assertions by writers that farming was subsidiary to fishing two generations ago. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes sally rods, and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, horses, and asses. Potatoes are the staple crop, and after they are harvested the land usually is seeded with grass and used as pasturage for a number of years before being replanted. Indigenous soils bearing grass at the back of the island also serve as pasturage, and horses and asses at times are permitted to roam the trails and common land to forage whatever they can [262] from the meager flora there. Supplementing potatoes in the diet are various vegetables, milk from cows and nanny goats, meat from island sheep and poultry, [342] fish, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is [343] grown for thatching houses and contiguous outbuildings, as well as barns located [493] south of the terrace crest, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. The only vehicles in Inis Beag are three two-wheeled carts employed to transport heavy loads, such as building stones, along the rough and narrow trails. Most householders own asses or horses, often ridden, which carry burdens in baskets
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28 or pull carts. Other subsistence activities are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, shoemaking, and net making, although the last skill almost has died out.

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[437] A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep reared or fattened in the island and of surplus potatoes, the collection of seaweed for extraction of its iodine content at a mainland factory, the manufacture of [28] craft objects, and the keeping of tourists in private homes. Among the craft commodities produced are cable-knit sweaters, miniature *curach*, stockings knitted at the local factory in the coast guard station, and articles of clothing worn by the folk—woven belts, cowhide shoes, and shawls. These goods are sold both to visitors [657] and to middlemen who resell them in Ireland and export them abroad. The cash economy is buttressed considerably by government subsidies of many sorts and [651] by remittances from emigrant kin. Not only are income and property taxes not [421] collected in Inis Beag, but rents are extremely low, both of which conditions rep- [124] resent indirect government subsidization. Income information is as difficult to come by as data concerning pagan supernatural beliefs, disputes, and sexual atti-

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244 quarter-acre garden. The seed potatoes are cut so that each segment has two "eyes," and they are "stabbed" into the ridges in three rows with a digging stick, deep enough to escape the foraging of birds and rats, yet above the decaying seaweed [462] which can "burn" the seed and cause it not to yield. It is not uncommon for [857] women and children to stab seeds while the man of the house is trenching ridges in another part of the field. Many kinds of spuds are grown by the islanders, some of which are "early" and can be harvested before the end of June; the folk argue the relative merits of varieties of potatoes just as they do the use of fertilizers and farming techniques.

221 Planting must be completed before the cuckoo arrives in late April and 244 sounds its call, and the person who is still seeding when the bird first is heard is 626 the subject of ridicule. The laggard in some parts of Ireland is called a "cuckoo farmer," and it is said in Inis Beag that one who is "lazy about planting is lazy about everything." A tale is told of a Castle villager who saw another man, considered by the islanders to be overly indolent, cutting potato seeds in early April, whereupon he climbed the wall of the castle and imitated the song of the cuckoo. The victim of the practical joke gave up his job in disgust and fed the seed to his poultry. My wife and I witnessed a heated argument in a pub over the date of arrival of the first cuckoo of 1960. Word was passed among the men, some of whom were still planting, that a lighthouse keeper had heard the song five days before. The keeper was denounced as an exaggerator and "troublemaker," and agreement was reached that the bird always is heard first in Low Village and not at the back of the island. The official date of the cuckoo's arrival later was set at April 27th—15 days after its alleged appearance at the lighthouse.

244 "Late" potatoes are harvested from the ridges by spade as needed from mid-July until the end of October, at which time the gardens are emptied (see [251] Fig. 7). The harvested spuds are separated in the fields into those to be fed to livestock, those to be used for seeding the next year, and those to be eaten; then [626] they are transported by horse or ass to be stored in outbuildings. Just as the person who has failed to complete seeding by the time the cuckoo arrives is censured by his neighbors, so is the one who has not removed all of his potatoes from the ground by mid-November. As a man said to me when evaluating potential sons-in-law, "The father of a girl would think twice about marrying off his daughter to a man who didn't have his spuds in by the middle of the month."

242 Supplementing the potato dominated diet of the folk are other locally 244 grown vegetables: cabbages, carrots, onions, turnips, parsnips, and lettuce. They are planted between March and May in ridges in much the same manner as spuds—on fallowing land, in small areas within fields containing indigenous soils which have been improved for this purpose, and in gardens in the villages where [443] they are readily accessible. The more prosperous Inis Beag families also avail [462] themselves of canned peas, beans, and carrots sold in the shops. It is usual for men to plant vegetables, but both men and women tend them to maturity and collect the plants after early September as they are needed for the table.

246 Once the potato fields are emptied, most farmers plant grass in them before 221 the coming of winter. This allows the hay to be cut in June and July of the following year, after which more grass will come in for fall and winter pasturage. Grass

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[462] fishing season, will not use up so much time getting to and from the pastures. Other reasons for shifting cows are that the village wells are more dependable than the springs at the back of the island during occassional summer dry spells, and cows when "tormented" by insects can run about the terrace fields more safely than they can the rockier and more fissured indigenous and improved plots above.

[512] Milking is done between eight thirty and ten o'clock in the morning and four thirty and six in the afternoon during the winter, and an hour or two later in the summer. When milking, the farmer crouches at the right side of the beast and holds a pail with his left hand while drawing one teat at a time with his right. He murmurs to the cow in Irish to keep it pacified, and is ready to move swiftly should the animal suddenly shift its position.

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[233] To encourage cattle breeding, the government subsidizes the construction of reservoirs at the back of the island for collecting rain water, and of barns and outbuildings for storing hay, rye, potatoes, and farming and fishing equipment. The typical reservoir is placed in an area surrounded by actual or potential grazing land located at a considerable distance from the nearest spring. It is composed of a cemented stone platform with a slanting concave surface which drains into a

[343] rectangular shaped tank. Barns and outbuildings are small stone structures, usually thatched, which are single roomed and doored and may have one or two small windows. The barns, like the reservoirs, are placed within easy access of fields used for pasturage.

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236 Sheep are reared in Inis Beag to furnish wool, as well as to be sold and slaughtered for local consumption. They demand little care, as they are allowed to graze in undeveloped pastures and to obtain water from rain filled depressions in the pavement and from plants that they devour. Kept by their owners for five or six years and then disposed of, they are sheared once a year between May and July There are white, brown, and black haired varieties, and between six and eight

[437] pounds of wool can be procured from an animal every shearing. If a householder possesses a large herd, he may choose to sell some of his lambs when they are six months old. and in August many lambs are shipped from Inis Beag on the steamer.

[262] Although some folk from time to time slaughter their own sheep to provide meat
[437] for the tables, several householders maintain large herds and specialize in selling lamb and mutton to visitors and fellow islanders.

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[232] All Inis Beag homes have at least one dog and most of them have a cat. These animals perform certain services and act as pets. At the time walls were
[224] low at the back of the island, dogs were employed to round up sheep, and they also aided their owners hunt rabbits along the rock piled shore of the west sound, when the meat of this animal was eaten more commonly than it is today. Now, their duties are restricted to warning of the approach of strangers and chasing chickens out of the kitchen. Cats are kept to catch mice, and their presence on the premises is sufficient to keep rats from approaching the house and outbuildings. They are treated less well than dogs, but both dogs and cats are given little affection and often are not fed enough. It is true that some islanders are strongly attached to their pets and provide them with adequate care, but they are the exceptions. A man devoted to his dog will be followed about the island by the animal, and a desired trait in a dog is that it will not show interest in persons outside of the

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duced trawlers and other types of fishing vessels and financed their purchase by islanders of the region, sent instructors to teach fishermen how to use the new boats and gear, set up curing and storage facilities in the islands, facilitated the shipping of fish to mainland markets, and attempted to regulate these markets so as to ensure maximum profits for the folk. These efforts failed for the most part in Inis Beag, and today the men fish from *curach*, much as did their grandfathers. The continuing effort of the government to improve fishing in the area is reflected in instruction in modern fishing techniques at a school in a nearby island, and the successful operation of a number of government financed trawlers and other fishing boats from there.

The islanders consider fish from the sea, which are netted, more palatable and healthier to eat than those caught with lines and trawls, fresh water fish, and fish which have been cured or frozen. Fish taken on lines, because they bleed, and those enmeshed in trawls, because they suffocate, are thought to suffer in taste and nourishment, as do those which are treated artificially for sale; and fresh water fish are believed to be unhealthy to eat because they feed on refuse thrown into lakes and rivers rather than on natural foods. Some folk exclude even mackerel from their diet, since these fish "swim on the surface and eat everything dirty afloat." We already have noted that Inis Beag elders prefer seaweed to chemical fertilizers; the preference for netted fish which feed on natural foods to fresh water fish and mackerel which are contaminated is another example of a recurrent cultural theme—the positive valuation of natural objects and the negative valuation of artificial ones which come in contact with the human body. Other manifestations of this theme are the emphasis placed on folk medicines and the distrust of medicines prescribed by nurse and doctor, the belief that certain foods will assure health and combat specific illnesses, and the fear of piped water and canned foods. I often was told that I could improve my eyesight by giving up my glasses and rubbing dew on my eyelids, or by walking along the seashore to allow the wind and spray to penetrate my eyeballs.

Over 30 varieties of fish are caught off Inis Beag, some with lines of varying length and number of hooks, others in the four types of nets, and a few with both lines and nets. Most important of the fish are: ling, cod, bream, gurnet, haddock, and autumn mackerel caught with lines; plaice, turbot, rock fish, and pollack both netted and taken on lines; and herring and spring mackerel captured in special nets. Trammel and drag nets are used in addition to herring and mackerel nets, and the most commonly used baits are gurnet, haddock, conger eel, bream, herring, and limpets. Fishing techniques vary considerably, as do the times of the year when particular kinds of fish are available, the localities that they frequent, and the baits which are most effective for each variety. Fishing crews form at different times of the year, often to fish in certain areas for specific fish. They are composed of both kin and close friends, and they tend to alter in membership from year to year as other activities intrude.

Before I leave the subject of fishing, I wish to correct three commonly held misconceptions concerning Inis Beag men: they are all skilled seamen; because they spend much of their time at sea they are of necessity able swimmers; and

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many of them have lost their lives to the ocean. Islanders are well aware of the wide differences in rowing and fishing abilities among themselves, and the evaluation of the skills of various men, past and present, is a much heard subject of conversation. Also, many men choose not to fish because they are unable to develop the requisite talents, are prone to severe seasickness, or are overly wary of the dangers associated with fishing. It seems reasonable to assume that people who spend so much time on the water as a matter of safety will have learned to swim, but I was unable to discover a single islander who possesses this skill. The reasons put forward to account for the fact are several, but the most significant one never is broached—the puritanical reluctance to bare the body either publicly or privately at any age. Folk rationalizations are best summed up in the following quotations: "Nothing will happen to the man who knows the sea.", "Better for a man to drown at once and save himself the suffering.", "The man who can't swim will take more care.", and "When death is on a man, he can't be saved."

A recurring motif in writings about Inis Beag is the threatening sea and heavy loss of life among fishermen, with its attendant psychological depression. In the past century, only four sea accidents have occurred in the island with the loss of but 12 lives. The folk are extremely cautious out of respect for the elements, handle their canoes with remarkable dexterity, and are excellent weather forecasters. The claim of one famous writer that each family has lost male members to the ocean reflects not only his psychological outlook, but the breadth and depth of kinship reckoning and the high degree of inbreeding—as an islander told me, "Every Inis Beag family is related, and the drowned man might have been eight-of-kin (third cousin) who died 60 years ago." The motif can be attributed to the projection of a tragic world view into the interpretation of the local culture by some authors, to the nativistic and primitivistic biases of other writers, and to a common sense conclusion reached by observers who have spent little time in the island and have failed to "count noses."

Diet

The diet of the islanders is simple, and only one large meal is eaten during the day. After the turf fire is rekindled from coals and water is boiled for tea, the family assembles for a breakfast which includes bread spread with butter and jam and tea mixed with ample amounts of milk and sugar. Dinner at noon and lunches in the late afternoon and before retiring at night feature the same ingredients, although a boiled or fried egg usually is added to the dinner menu. The supper, eaten between seven and eight o'clock in the summer and an hour or two earlier during the winter, is the main meal when the family once again is united, and at this time boiled potatoes and vegetables, and meat if available, dominate the menu. Again bread and tea are served, and a dessert, or "sweet"—such as custard, rhubarb, blancmange, or biscuits—may be added. Children of school age in a family eat together at noon and after school and may be joined by their father, but his duties often absent him from one or both of these meals, and he may carry bread and tea

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with him while fishing or be brought his dinner and afternoon lunch in the field. Infants and young children are fed milk at various times, and the youth often eat biscuits, candy, or bread spread with sugar between the five regular meals.

Most women bake their own bread in "pot ovens" suspended over the open fire, with ingredients purchased in the shops, but some buy bakery bread which is delivered from the mainland once a week. Women with many offspring must bake bread daily, since as many as five loaves will be eaten in a day by a family of eight. Cream is saved from the milk and turned into butter in locally made churns every few days, to provide the pound or more of butter consumed in a week by each member of the family. A few women purchase shop butter and also margarine for cooking, but the latter is not used on the table (despite the fact that it is one-third the price of imported butter), because it is an artificial product and thus thought to lack food value. Both chicken and duck eggs are eaten, and some persons prefer hard to soft boiled eggs. Men insist on drinking their tea from large mugs and prefer their bread sliced thick and spread generously with butter. Telling of a tea that he attended in Dublin, a man complained of teacups the size of egg cups and bread cut so thin that "you could see houses on the mainland through it." Children are more prone than adults to use jam on their bread, and a large jar of imported jam will last but a day in a household containing six children.

Few families can afford to serve meat daily, and sometimes several days will pass before meat appears on the table. Among the meats eaten are lamb, mutton, chicken, and fish procured locally, and rasher and sausage bought in the shops; however, some families have beef and lamb shipped directly to them from mainland shops weekly. Meats usually are boiled, even fish, and soup and gravy are made from the liquids formed. Although lobsters, crabs, snails, and other shelled sea creatures are obtained by the folk, they are exported, used for bait, or cast aside rather than eaten. Two kinds of seaweed are included in the diet and are considered delicacies: *creannach*, which can be consumed raw as it is pulled but more commonly is boiled and dried before being eaten, and *carraigín*, which when cooked with milk makes a tasty blancmange. These seaweeds are believed to promote health and are used as folk medicines by some islanders, who regard them as having a magical potency.

The potatoes grown in Inis Beag are considered outstanding in taste, even when compared with those grown on the mainland. They are boiled in a "cooking pot" over the open hearth; this container is deeper and has a rounder bottom than its pot oven counterpart. At one time, it was customary to drain potatoes and eat them from a round, flat, short-sided basket woven from sally rods, called a *ciseog*. They still are drained with the basket in many households, but I have observed only three families eating communally from a *ciseog* atop the table. This is thought to be a "backward" custom, and a film producer earned the wrath of the folk by portraying this trait in his work; actually, it did not appear in the film, nor did other sequences, such as a women suckling a pig in time of drought, which the islanders claim that the producer included to brand them "savages." Potatoes when eaten are "stabbed" with a fork, peeled with a knife, and eaten with the

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fork. It is not unusual for a man to eat six or eight large spuds at a sitting, and the pot used to boil potatoes for a large family is piled high indeed. Spuds also are fed to cattle, poultry, and pets. The diet of families which are most prosperous, keep tourists, or whose members are acculturated is more varied than the diet that I have just described, and these families utilize the shops more than is usual.

The excessive intake of carbohydrates, particularly by children, coupled with the almost complete absence of dental hygiene, has resulted in universal tooth decay among the folk. Many people in their twenties and thirties already wear false teeth, and toothache is the most common physical ailment. My wife and I discovered but one adult who cleans her teeth, and she only once a week with a cloth and toothpaste. The islanders eschew use of the toothbrush for several reasons: some believe that bad teeth are inherited or decay is a contagious disease, and nothing can be done to prevent deterioration once it has set in; others equate decay with the common cold, a natural affliction suffered by everyone which must be accepted fatalistically (and masochistically); while still others regard the toothbrush as an English innovation or its use as an upper class affectation—"If I used one they would say I had fancy ideas."—to be shunned on these grounds. A story whose plot was laid in an island in the region of Inis Beag appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, and was illustrated with photographs taken in Inis Thiar. The Dublin model who portrayed the heroine in local attire was recognized as an outsider by the folk who viewed the pictures because her teeth were white and even.

Clothing

The term traditional applied to the much publicized Inis Beag garb refers to the homespun vests and trousers and blue woolen shirts of the men, the ankle-length red and blue woolen skirts and a type of shawl of the women, and the cowskin shoes and woven belts worn by many men but only a few women. Some of these articles of wear are shared with peasants of the region, or were in the past and thus are vestigial; others are unique to Inis Beag; and all are in the process of being replaced by mass produced mainland attire. Of 111 adult males in Inis Beag, 11 have given up the local dress, as have 9 of the 85 adult females. Most of these 20 have returned to the island from having spent time on the mainland or abroad, and as a matter of prestige have chosen to retain the foreign costume. Practically all of the young men past school age who have not been away dress traditionally, but none of the women between ages 18 and 29 do; the youngest women who wear the red or blue skirt are of the latter age.

Although most clothing worn by the islanders is tailored locally, everything but the trousers and vests of the men are made from imported materials. Clothing is tailored from cloth woven by the island weaver from Inis Beag wool which is washed, dyed, and spun in the homes but carded on the mainland. The trousers are brown or grey depending on whether a brown or black weft is combined with the white warp on the loom; they are called "britches" when styled differently as to seam and hem. Vests also are brown or grey in front with backs dyed blue, and

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there's going to be a life hereafter," someone shouted out from the audience, "There won't be.", and the others laughed so uproariously and for so long a time that she had to discontinue singing.

Only Catholics can enter Heaven, so most islanders claim, and among the faithful only saints go directly to Heaven at death, as preordained by God. All others who escape Hell must sojourn in Purgatory, where the temporal punishment of sins previously forgiven must be endured, and the guilt of unrepented venial sins cleared away. Conceptions of Purgatory are vague, but it is felt that severe punishments are meted out there, and that the stay of most Catholics is a long one, even though mitigated by earthly indulgences and penances. Theirs is an example of what some theologians term a "dreary interpretation of Purgatory," with its emphasis on the sinful nature of man. Several times we were told that we would enter Heaven even though not Catholic, because "religions are like canoes which set out on separate courses for a mainland port, yet all reach their destination;" always we were cautioned not to disclose this personal belief to the curate.

The most significant religious events of the year in Inis Beag are certain Catholic feast days, masses performed in homes twice each year, marriages, funerals, visits to the holy well, and several pagan observances. Of the many feast days commemorating the mysteries of the faith and honoring particular saints, eight are holydays of obligation in Ireland: Circumcision, St. Patrick, Ascension, Corpus Christi, Assumption, All Saints, Immaculate Conception, and Nativity. On these days the folk attend mass, abstain from work, and do not conduct business. The feasts of St. Patrick and Christmas among these, and the lesser feasts of St. Brigid, Easter, the patron saint of Inis Beag, St. John, All Souls, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, are considered the most important locally. Although pagan elements are incorporated to some extent in all feast days, reinterpretations are most in evidence in the feasts of St. Brigid, St. John, St. Martin, and St. Stephen, and thus they will be taken up later in the chapter.

Lent in Inis Beag is a period during which men are hard at work farming, and social activities are at low ebb. The laws of fast and abstinence during Lent impose no hardships on the folk in light of the simplicity of their diet, with meat often absent from the table and only one full meal taken during the day as a matter of course. The standard of living in the island is such that for most people there is "too little to give up anything." Many islanders abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages during Lent, and will imbibe only on St. Patrick's Day, March 17th. Following the shipwreck (six days after Ash Wednesday in 1960), when salvaged Scotch whiskey was present in vast quantities, several men who had "sworn off" spirits took to drinking Vat 69 in the privacy of their homes; when the practice became known publicly, they claimed that they were "off the stout" only, which is what most men drink ordinarily because of the high cost of liquor. St. Patrick's Day is much anticipated because it is a holyday of obligation when work ceases, drink can be taken by abstainers, and there is a dance in the boat house in the evening. The dance did not materialize in 1960, because the time of flood tide, when the grounded freighter could best be boarded, coincided with the time of the dance. Before mass on St. Patrick's Day, boys in groups search for shamrocks, which, if found, will ensure the finder "riches" in the future. Women that day wear

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796 527 782 year during the early morning. The folk visit the church and graveyard throughout the day and are awarded indulgences for their prayers in behalf of souls of the dead residing in Purgatory. In the cemetery, prayers are offered for relatives, one at a time, and then for everyone buried there, those lost at sea, and those who have no one to pray for them. An islander going to the chapel makes a succession of visits inside to pray, retiring to the churchyard after each prayer; an indulgence is granted for every visit, and some children carry small stones and pile them outside of the chapel to keep count of the indulgences thus acquired. It is said of those who remain longest in the cemetery and make the most number of visits to the chapel that they are attempting to mollify the ghosts of relatives whom they treated badly when alive.

796 The 12 days of Christmas commence with the feast of the Nativity on December 25th and end with the feast of the Epiphany on January 6th, and include the feasts of St. Stephen on December 26th, Holy Innocents on December 28th, and Circumcision on January 1st. This is the high point of the year for the folk, even though it is a much quieter period today than it was half a century ago, when social concerns outweighed religious ones. Work is suspended altogether on Christmas and the three days following it and on January 1st and 6th, and during [167] [582] [574] the rest of the period only "light chores" are done. Importance is attached to the 12 days over and above their religious significance and the fact that little work is done; for at this time emigrants return to Inis Beag on holiday; if a marriage is to occur during the year it is likely to be arranged then; at least one party usually is given which attracts most of the adults; and the men gather in the pubs on [621] several nights to sing, dance, and tell stories. For weeks before Christmas, rumors abound as to which relatives will visit the island, who will marry whom, and where the party will take place; these serve to sharpen the anticipation of the islanders and to make them less mindful of the worsening of the weather.

[292] In preparation for the Christmas season, new clothes are fashioned—as at Easter—to be worn initially on the five feast days, and it is usual for a man needing [351] a new *crios* to have it woven in time for Christmas mass. Houses and streets are [356] cleaned and repaired, fireplaces whitewashed, and supplies are taken in for the 12 days as steamer service is curtailed. On Christmas Eve, a special dish of • [262] corned ling or cod smothered in sauce is served at "Christmas supper," and large [364] white candles purchased in the shops are placed on the dining table and in one or more windows of the cottage, to be burned nightly during the 12 days. The sight from the sea of the darkened island with its hundreds of candles rivals in beauty the view of the mainland coast far away on St. John's Eve, when bonfires are [574] lighted as far as the eye can see. Relatives visit one another after Christmas supper, [431] and when the children have been put to bed, stockings are hung above the fireplace and filled by the parents with oranges, candies, ribbons, pencils, handkerchiefs, [861] and toys for the infants. Santa Claus is the gift giver, so infants are taught, and thus he can be used to promote good behavior on their part in the weeks prior to Christmas; this belief seldom persists into childhood, however, as older children [431] are eager to disabuse their younger siblings of it. Adults usually do not exchange gifts, but they receive them from kin and acquaintances abroad to whom they in [262] turn send Christmas cards. On Christmas Day, special cakes and breads are served

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at breakfast and lamb, if available, at supper, and the family goes out only to attend mass. Many homes are decorated then for the 12 days, with cards received and sprigs of holly placed on windowsills and fireplace mantels and crepe paper and balloons hung from the ceiling. More visiting among relatives is done between St. Stephen's Day and Epiphany than at any other time of the year. and guests are treated to cakes and drinks, which include liquor.

Whereas the folk during the Christmas season are the most optimistic and expansive, they are the least so for the three or more days following the death of one of their number. Work halts until after the burial of the deceased—"out of respect for the body"—and subdued talk focuses on death and salvation and the tribulations of life on earth. It is at this time that the masochism of the islanders is most in evidence, and they are most prone to discuss the teachings of the church, to reveal doubts concerning the afterworld, and to bemoan their own sinful lives. In evaluating the career of the person who has just died, an attempt is made to explain the cause of his demise, and both natural and supernatural causes are considered. Most deaths are attributed to the natural causes of old age, illness, and accident; but death also can come as the result of God's will and the actions of the Devil and malignant pagan forces, such as witches of the evil eye and ghosts. The immediate mourning for one who dies before the age of 40 years is deep and prolonged, particularly if small children are left with only a single parent, and it is believed that "the good die young." One of the most disliked traditions in Inis Beag is that of formal mourning for a year, during which time social activities for close relatives of the deceased are curtailed severely; they cannot attend parties, sing, dance, or play music in their homes, and men must reduce in number their visits to the pubs. Life is so dull as a matter of course, so the complaint is, that placing restrictions on what few social activities are available makes it almost unbearable.

When a person dies, his body is "waked" in the house until taken in procession to the church during the late afternoon of the day following death. Another procession escorts the coffin to the cemetery early the next morning, after it has stood the night unattended near the altar. How many folk attend the wake and compose the two processions depends on the number of the dead person's kin, his prestige status, and how well he was liked. The "laying out" of the corpse for the wake is done by close female relatives of the deceased; they wash the body and powder its face, put on the clothes or habit, and prepare the bed on which the corpse will rest. A man may be attired in new white bawneens and *crios* and a woman in her wedding dress, but it is becoming more common today for the body to be clothed in a purchased brown habit. On the breast the hands are crossed and rosary beads entwined in the fingers, and the corpse is covered up to the chest with a white sheet which later is used to wrap it up in the coffin. The manufacture of the coffin usually is assigned to one of the canoe and furniture makers, who assembles it crudely with unpainted boards and delivers it the night of the wake or the following morning.

The wake now is a solemn occasion in most of Ireland, and is attended for the purpose of praying for the soul of the dead and sympathizing with the relatives of the deceased. But until recently it was a gay affair, merrier than a wedding,

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Celts. But local legend, historical evidence, and genealogical data collected by my wife and me indicate that the present population is descended from immigrants who came to the island from many parts of Ireland following the Cromwellian incursion of the seventeenth century. The islanders still express bitterness over conditions of poverty and servitude experienced by their ancestors during the 300 years that they lived under absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. All of the excesses of foreign domination suffered by mainland peasants were suffered by the inhabitants of Inis Beag, but were aggravated by the ordinary hardships of island living. Little was known about events in Inis Beag during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries until the island was visited by archeologists and publicized in their scientific writings. The surrounding area of the mainland was very much isolated and seldom visited at that time, although trading between Inis Beag and nearby communities was carried on, and passing ships sometimes called at the island.

Agricultural pursuits have always dominated the subsistence economy of Inis Beag. Most householders own land on which they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes rye and sally rods and where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, asses, and horses. The back of the island, behind the communities, is divided into four strips, and each landowner possesses numerous plots located along the "quarter" on which his village fronts. The average combined holding is sixteen acres, and almost 50 percent of the land is composed of arable indigenous and manufactured soils. Potatoes are the staple crop, and they are supplemented by various other vegetables, milk from cattle and goats, meat from island sheep, fish, eggs, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is grown for thatching, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers. Other subsistence activities (which also provide income for some folk) are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring, and sandal making.

A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep fattened on the island and of surplus potatoes and fish, the collection of seaweed for extraction of iodine at a mainland factory, the keeping of tourists in private homes, and the manufacturing of craft objects for sale to visitors and for export. At the turn of the century, fishing from canoes—with nets and lines often many miles out in the ocean—was an important subsistence and income activity. A few islanders who owned little or no land lived primarily by fishing and kelp-making. But over the past few decades, fish have become less plentiful and the weather more inclement, especially during winter